Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to review the theory based on «otherness» as a form of social exclusion and symbolic violence from the constructions of realities of the media, with particular emphasis on the ethics and aesthetics of language and its role in materializing identity differences.

Design/methodology/approach – A search for specific criteria and *boolean* algorithms is carried out in Web of Science and Scopus on «otherness» [AND] «social exclusion», to then submit the emerging results to a co-occurrence matrix by citations with VOSViewer v. 1.6.13. From the relation tree of the most cited documents [min = 7] of the downloaded articles, a critical/analytical reading is made.

Findings – «Otherness» is reviewed to a greater extent from a Western perspective, and more specifically, from a Eurocentric one. This implies that the study of «otherness» is not sufficiently analyzed by Asian or African authors, who are excluded from the analysis. In this sense, «otherness» is understood as a theoretical construct and as any symbolic construction of the other (phenotypically, but also in ideology, values and customs), but which carries a load of stereotypes that can become polarization, demonization, ergo and violence.

Originality/value – Revisiting «otherness» as an informative construct becomes imperative in light of the emergence of extremist groups and xenophobic parties, as well as separatist policies such as Brexit or the Catalan split in Spain. Few articles contribute to elaborating a complete conceptual construct on «otherness» as an epistemological category of communication and information, so this research effort attempts to compile its theoretical discussion.

Keywords Media, Language, Stereotypes, Demonization, Polarization, Discursive violence, Collective imaginary

Paper type Conceptual paper

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